

THE EUGENICS REVIEW

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"Eugenics is the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally."

NOTES OF THE QUARTER

ALL sociologists are now familiar with the immense survey of London life, a repetition of Booth's famous study, which the London School of Economics has undertaken. But less is known of a precisely similar study being made by the School of Social Science of Liverpool University. A complete cross-section of the population of a large area of Merseyside has been studied by Mr. D. Caradog Jones and his workers, who have obtained every possible economic and social detail of the inhabitants—incidentally eliciting some remarkably interesting facts, especially concerning the relation between poverty and housing conditions.* Hitherto, however, lack of money has caused the shelving of the inquiry into the abnormal types in the district, and it is therefore especially good news that funds have now been specifically allocated for their study. It was announced at the recent Assembly of the Population Union that Commission 2 (Differential Fertility) had made a grant for a study of the

fertility of all those human types—aments, the deaf, blind, insane, paupers, etc.—which are of most concern to eugenists. The study will be comparable to those of Mr. Liddbetter, and will be especially valuable, not only in giving details of the inheritance of various characters, but also in providing—what we have never had before—an analysis which will be strictly comparable with that of the 'controls,' the normal types in the same district.



The forebodings expressed in the article on the Papal Encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, in our last number have now been only too amply confirmed. Whatever may have been the intentions of the Pope himself, his spiritual subjects, from Cardinals to laymen, have uniformly interpreted the Encyclical as an *ex cathedra* instruction to force the Roman Catholic doctrine upon the sociology and politics of our Protestant State. The results were exemplified in the St. Rollox (Glasgow) by-election where the majority of Mr. William Leonard, the Labour candidate, was greatly reduced following a priestly declaration that "his opinion and advocacy of policy on the question of birth prevention is in direct conflict to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church."

Still more recently Cardinal Bourne has made it quite clear, in a sermon at Edinburgh (June 17th), that Catholics must vote [under pain of incurring sin] against Parliamentary or local government candidates who support what the Church disapproves—mainly sterilization, birth control, divorce law reform, and any form of eugenics. The Catholic Press, which has more influence over its readers than have most newspapers, has consistently taken this line in still more explicit terms.

Since the disapprobation of the Roman

* *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Part IV, 1930, and Part II, 1931; *Economic Journal*, June 1931; and No. 1: *Housing Conditions in Liverpool*—a sixpenny pamphlet issued by the Social Survey of Merseyside.

Church has focused itself on the very things with which we are so closely identified, this *Society* finds itself forced to take up a stand of uncompromising opposition, not only to the doctrines propounded, but also to the whole method by which it is sought to give effect to them. The *Society* happens to be, perhaps, the first organized body to bear the brunt of the attack, and it is essential for us to resist it. In particular, all our Fellows and Members should rally to the support of our Sterilization Bill which will doubtless be hotly resisted by the supporters of Catholicism.

Incidentally, it may be remarked, we have received no reply from Rome to our question whether the Encyclical was or was not an *ex cathedra* pronouncement. We scarcely expected an answer since, as Dr. Schiller has said, the effects of such pronouncements are so incalculable that His Holiness always takes the greatest care *not* to indicate which of his edicts come within that category. It is thus open to the rest of the Church to do as they are now doing with the Encyclical, and to interpret everything Papal as *ex cathedra*; while it is always possible for the Holy See, should unfortunate consequences ensue—witness Galileo and Darwin—to indicate that this or that pronouncement was not of the infallible order.



In considering the Sterilization Bill (see p. 153), readers should note that it is only an enabling measure, designed solely to clarify the ambiguous position of aments, who may not now be legally capable of giving consent to the operation, and especially of those who are too poor to pay for it. The Bill would enable them to be operated upon in public hospitals, either at their own or at their guardians' request, while it leaves untouched the question of the legality of sterilizing, with consent, those who are *compos mentis*. Certain legal authorities consider that, even with the consent of such a subject, a sterilization operation would be deemed to be "mayhem," a very ancient Common Law offence, or alternatively the

offence of "maiming" under the Offences Against the Person Act. Others, equally competent, consider that these offences have no relation to sterilization with consent, and that the latter is no more illegal than an operation for appendicitis.



The Public Assistance Committee of Newcastle-on-Tyne reports that during the past year (the first of the Committee's existence) 73 persons married while in receipt of poor relief. To these must be added 40 who came on relief within a week of marriage, 54 within a month, 39 within three months, and 30 within six months—making a grand total of 236. The *Report** continues:

"The total number of married men (unemployed) at present chargeable is 1,075, including 236 as enumerated above. In 150 of these cases, it has been ascertained that there are now 295 dependent children."



The question of the 'social problem group,' which this Report revives, is probably as grave a eugenic issue as strict amentia itself. Widows' Pensions and Health and Unemployment Insurance now provide, if meagrely, for practically all genuine industrial casualties, and leave to the Poor Law only the aged pensioners, a very small minority of bad luck cases, and a considerable army of social problems. It must be a very poor type of man who has failed to qualify for either form of insurance or for assistance from one of the many mutual aid organizations. Judging also from experience elsewhere—and Newcastle is not likely to be an exception—most of such recipients of poor relief are constitutionally ineffective through mental, temperamental, or physical deficiency. It is mainly this section which marries or in-

* *First Annual Report of Public Assistance Committee* (City and County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) for the year ended March 1931.

creases its families while dependent on State charity.

It is good to see that the *Report* views the issue very seriously; and, while it is not for us to discuss the sociological ethics of the problem, we can, as strict eugenisists, welcome this decision—"that in some cases institutional relief only should be afforded."



A further instance of the dire need for action to restrict marriage—or rather reproduction—comes from Leeds, where thirteen aments who had been under a local care committee were married during the year!

The Lord Mayor expressed himself strongly in demanding the prohibition of such marriages. There are many signs, indeed, that it is no longer the politicians of Parliament, but rather the local government bodies which pay most attention to these and other of the graver sociological issues of the day. Certainly the new Public Assistance Committees are showing a vivid consciousness of the thorny problems, including their eugenic aspects, they must tackle—as, indeed, did many of the old Boards of Guardians.

But their time of trial is yet to come. Until the 1929 Act came into force last year the elections of Guardians were distinct from those of other local government bodies. But now that the Public Assistance Committees are appointed by the County Councils, the election of the latter bodies will henceforth be influenced by the votes of recipients of relief—who, it need scarcely be said, will have many grievances to air.



Though the *REVIEW* is now consistently larger than was contemplated when the present format was adopted—and very much larger than in the old format—pressure on our space becomes ever heavier with each number. To publish all the really relevant matter available it would be necessary to issue eight, instead of four, numbers a year, or even to make a monthly of the *REVIEW*.

We can therefore only ask readers to realize, when we ignore or postpone interesting news, that it is purely due to the exigencies of space. Among much else, for instance, which we have been forced to omit from this present number is a survey of several very valuable American studies of differential fertility, as well as other matter from abroad.



In his Rectorial Address at Aberdeen University, Sir Arthur Keith was reported to have said that the only hope for the future of the human race lay in the continuance of war, whose pruning-hook performed the eugenic selection of the unfit. Since then, fortunately, the address* has been published, and it is abundantly clear that Sir Arthur—and, by implication, other eugenists—was the victim of a particularly glaring example of sensational misreporting. What he said, in fact, was the exact opposite of the Press accounts. These words were universally reported:

"Nature keeps her human orchard healthy by pruning; war is her pruning-hook. We cannot dispense with her services."

While these, which immediately follow, were equally universally omitted:

"This harsh and repugnant forecast of man's future is wrung from me. The future of my dreams is a warless world."

The theme of his address was that war and tribal instincts had in the past been largely responsible for man's evolution: they fostered the spirit of competition and patriotism, and especially did they create psychological barriers and thus isolate the tribes and nations during the ages of race-making. We must, therefore, recognize in ourselves this deep-rooted evolutionary legacy of prejudice and the competitive spirit—the things of the heart—and must

* Keith, Sir Arthur, F.R.S.: *The Place of Prejudice in Modern Civilization*. London, 1931. Williams & Norgate. Pp. 54. Price 2s. 6d.

organize it intelligently for our good. "Both reason and prejudice must have a place in national [and international] policy." Though shot through with a well-controlled competitive and patriotic spirit, the English and Scotch had already achieved something like his ideal of harmonious co-operation.

Though war in the past may very well have exercised a eugenic function in eliminating unfit individuals, as well as races, Sir Arthur never even mentioned that; and, from our knowledge of his previous work, we have no hesitation in declaring that he would be the first to condemn modern war as utterly disastrous—so much is implicit in the Address itself—and a most effective dysgenic agency.



A correspondent who wishes to remain anonymous has recently written to explain her new method both of reconciling eugenics with the ordinary sort of charity and of assisting the former in two ways. Her plan is so excellent that it deserves to be widely imitated, especially by those eugenicists who, for various reasons, feel it incumbent upon them to contribute to charities. She writes:

"For long I have thought that every reply to the bombardment for assistance from every sort of charity should be to ask these Committees if they ever pause to reflect on the impossible burden for our children and grandchildren that thoughtless 'Charity' is piling up. I seldom receive more than a formal answer, so of late I have stressed the dreadful importance of this fact by ear-

marking half a subscription to be sent to your society. If everyone did this we might get a move on."



Some discussion has been caused by the excellent study* of Dr. Gerald Leighton and Dr. Peter McKinlay on the effect of milk upon the growth of school-children. This is not the place to consider the intriguing hint in their figures that raw milk is of greater value than the pasteurized variety—that is for the dietician—but the human biologist is necessarily interested in the discovery—not *very* revolutionary—that the drinkers of a pint of milk a day grew more rapidly than the controls. In fact, this was only to be expected, since the rate of growth of a developing organism responds very rapidly to increased nutrition. But that is a very different thing from the general implication in the Press—unfortunately supported by loose writing in the preface—that the adult organism will thereby be the finer. Still less does it justify the assumption that a healthier "race" (preface) can result from better feeding.



THE EUGENIC CHILD:—*Mother, to Mary (aged 9)*: "The Smith boys have won six prizes at school."

Mary (after a short pause): "Oh, Mother, I *wish* I had clever parents!" —Recorded as a true story by the *Evening Standard*, to which we extend our grateful acknowledgments.

* Leighton, Gerald, and McKinlay, Peter L.: *Milk Consumption and the Growth of School Children*. Edinburgh, 1930. Stationery Office. Pp. 20. Price 3d.

